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## PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORLD

By Edward Neilan



# Whence the urge to go into spying?

These are tough days in the spy game.

Turnover, as always, is brisk. Job satisfaction is spotty, compensation seems not to be keeping pace with other occupations and tenure is uncertain.

Retirement plans are skimpy and in most cases — because of the dangers inherent in the job description — the prospect of ever reaching Espionage Sun City is remote.

In view of all the negative baggage, what makes a young man go into spying? What is the reason for treason?

There have been extensive dissections of the motivations of a Kim Philby who betrayed the establishment which created him, but for the most part the question marks remain.

Surely the reason for betraying one's country goes beyond financial reward.

A Soviet defector using the pseudonym Victor Suvarov, told the British Broadcasting Corporation the other day that in order to keep GRU (military intelligence) spies from defecting, they were threatened with "burning alive" if caught. Video cassette tapes of immolation of agents whose defection plans were discovered were shown to other GRU agents.

This is hardly the Dale Carnegie approach to the care and feeding and retention of loyal spies. But such harsh reports seem not to deter the recruitment of new agents. What compelled 21-year-old Christopher Boyce in Los Angeles to take up a life of spying against the United States?

And what motivated — if the legal system decides they are indeed guilty — John, Michael and Arthur Walker — the father, son and brother arrested recently by the FBI — to peddle naval secrets to the Soviet Union?

Hardly a day goes by without a spy being arrested, summarily defrocked or seeking asylum. Perhaps that is because the world spy population is increasing.

Mr. Suvarov told the BBC that the Soviet Union has up to 40 military intelligence agents working in Britain in addition to KGB spies.

The defector, who said he had been a major in the GRU, said that agency was run out of the Soviet Embassy in London.

"It is a very big organization.... I would say 30 to 40 people," Mr. Suvarov said. Many GRU agents worked in the Soviet trade delegation, he said. "It is the best imaginable cover. You can walk into any factory, and businessmen are pleased to talk to Soviet trade missions because of the possibility of making a profitable deal."

Other agents, he said, work for the Soviet airline Aeroflot and for the Soviet merchant fleet.

In 1971, Britain ordered the mass expulsion of 105 Soviet diplomats and officials accused of espionage. In April, five Soviet officials were sent home in the latest crackdown.

Baltimore spy novelist Stephen Hunter says that Mr. Philby's path to a career of espionage was partly because "he was raised strangely, he was part con man, part mystic, part eccentric."

Another novelist, John Le Carre, wrote of Mr. Philby: "From his father Kim acquired the neo-Fascist instincts of a slightly berserk English gentleman; from his father the establishment's easy trick of rationalizing selfish decisions and dressing them in the clothes of a higher cause; from his father the cartographer's memory; from his father the scholar's perceptions which enabled him to keep track of his own complicated treachery... If he had labored all his life to create in Kim the irresistible chemistry of the boy's later betrayal, he could not have done much more."

In his own remarkable memoir, "My Secret War," Mr. Philby says of his own recruitment, "One does not look twice at an offer of enrollment into an elite force."

Author Hunter's assessment of that explanation: "How very British! How exquisitely crafted and honed by class-consciousness."

Stanislav Levchenko, the onetime KGB major now living in Arlington, says that when he was in charge of recruiting agents among Japanese newsmen in Tokyo, financial reward was never a critical consideration.

Mr. Levchenko said a sense of importance or of "getting even" with a society that had heaped abuse or indifference on them was often a more compelling reason to become a traitor.

*Edward Neilan is foreign editor of The Times.*